

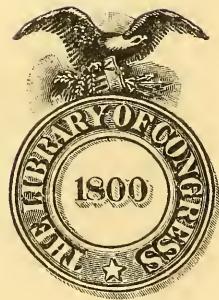
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ST. MICHAEL'S CHIME  
AND OTHER VERSES





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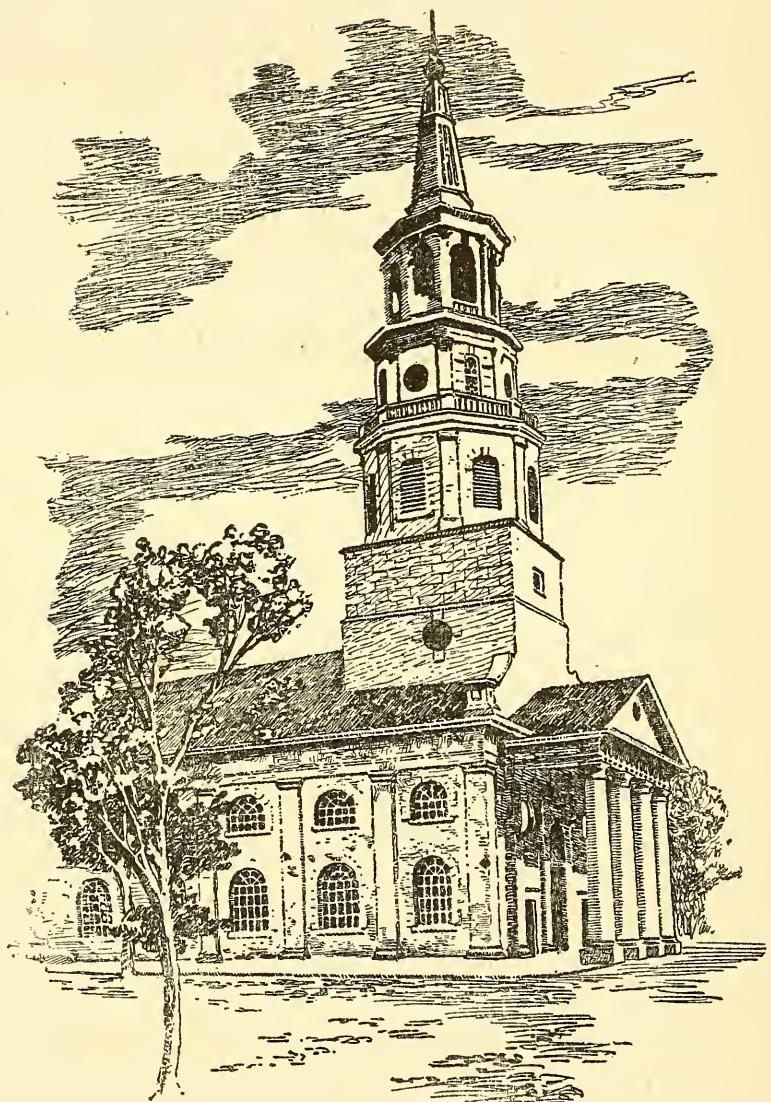
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**ST. MICHAEL'S CHIME  
AND OTHER VERSES**



# ST. MICHAEL'S CHIME AND OTHER VERSES

BY

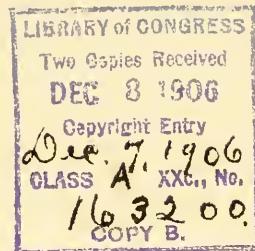
# HELEN TRENHOLM DICKINSON

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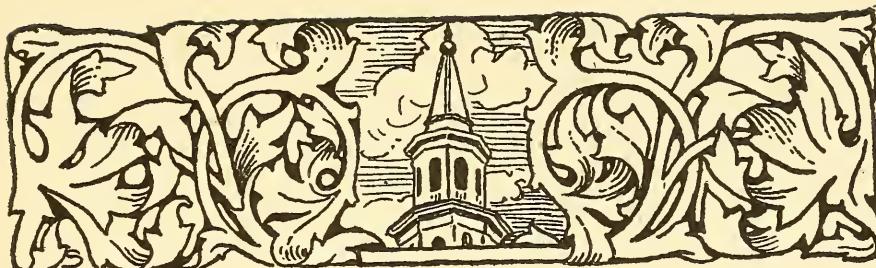
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BY  
M. O. DICKINSON

To M. O. D.  
my most appreciative reader  
Helen Trenholm Dickinson





## ST. MICHAEL'S CHIME AND OTHER VERSES

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### ST. MICHAEL'S CHIME

**S**unday—a morn in spring, when  
Charleston's streets  
Are flooded by the sunshine spring-  
time gives,  
When roses scatter lavishly their sweets  
And reawakened nature laughs and lives,  
When lilies on their stems luxuriant sway,  
And violets breathe their souls out all the day.

From deep-sea gardens drifts a gentle breeze,  
Full-freighted with the fragrance of the main,  
That whispers 'round the freshly budded trees,  
And, veering, flutters oceanward again;  
As aimless as the butterfly that goes  
In dreamy dalliance from rose to rose.

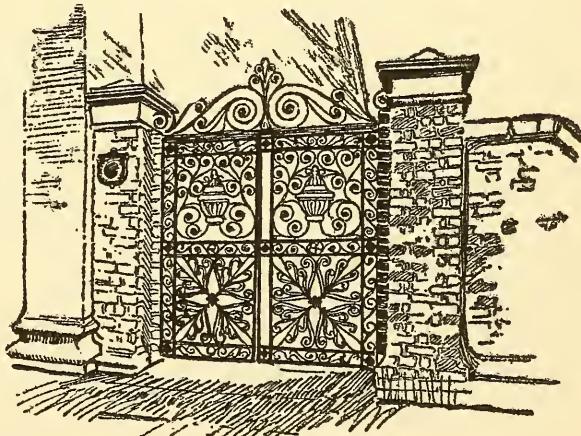


In old St. Michael's yard the graves, grassgrown,  
Are clothed with vernal freshness every year,  
And blossoms ope against the mossy stone,  
Where mouldering inscriptions scarce appear  
Recording virtues of the one who lies  
Beneath its weight with dust upon his eyes.

'Tis very quiet in this churchyard's shade!  
Methinks the Spirit of the Deathless Past  
One holy wing across the gate hath laid,  
Barring the Present that the peace might last—  
The peace of fragrant, unforgotten years,  
When these same graves were wet with new-wrung  
tears.

And, while I muse upon the stillness, break  
Harmonies sweetly restful to the soul,  
That echo evermore: "Awake! Awake!"

All ye that sleep  
in darkness!"  
Roll on roll,  
As outward floats  
with melody  
sublime  
The benediction of  
St. Michael's  
chime!





## THE SEA-WALL

### YOUTH

A long sea-wall, where waves beat restlessly,  
    A dreaming bay,  
Where sunbeams gild the ripples carelessly  
    All through the summer day—  
Yet I and thou discern dark shades that fall  
Beside the long sea-wall.

### MANHOOD

A storm-tossed sea, waves high and turbulent;  
    A heavy blast  
That rips the sheet of many a fisher's barque,  
    That snaps the slender mast;  
Whilst thou and I note how a misty pall  
Hangs o'er the old sea-wall.

### AGE

Winter, with skies that lower hopelessly  
    Above the tide;  
I shiver as the rain falls icily  
    And mutely seek thy side;  
And we can scarcely see, for tears that fall,  
That waves have overleapt the long sea-wall.



## A DAY

A boat was rocking in the bay—  
Before the noon it sailed away.

Laughed a child by the ocean tide—  
Ere night came down the child had died.

And still the waves are surging free,  
And still the sunlight floods the sea.

The boat hath reached another bay,  
The child has seen the Perfect Day.

## WHERE WAVES WHISPER

Along the sands elusive shadows lie,  
While wingèd clouds sweep o'er a dreamy sky.  
And one could think that mermaids in their glee  
Had strewn with pearls their pathway o'er the sea,  
As with their harps they drifted one by one  
Into the palace of the setting sun.



## CRYSTALS

The stone was rugged, brown and scarred by time;  
Not beautiful to look on, lying there;  
Yet when 'twas broken by the miner's axe,  
Lo! what a miracle the blow laid bare.

Within that ugly shell behold—a mass  
Of purest crystal  
Sparkles in the light,  
And quivers all aglow with lucid tints,  
With opalescent hues—a wondrous sight!

So have I seen a soul pent in a form,  
Unlovely, graceless, yet, behind the wall  
Of flesh, was hid the spirit burning pure,  
Which, when its prison-house to wreck, shall fall,

Struck by the miner—Death—what beauty then  
Shall be disclosed! What a glorious sight,  
To see the soul emerge from homely clay,  
Fair as a crystal, clothed with burning light.



## THE EVENING STAR

When the day dies beyond the purple mountain,  
And with her life blood stains the west afar,  
High 'mid the gushing of that vermeil fountain  
Leaps into life the glorious evening star.

Whence hath it birth and whither doth it travel,  
Down the red pathway leading from our sight,  
As on its way it seemeth to unravel  
Fringes of stars to deck the sovereign night?

Throbbing with wondrous radiance supernal,  
Thrilling with mystic meaning are its beams,  
Rousing the spirit as the showers vernal  
Wake the wind flower by deep forest streams.

Is it a lantern held by angel fingers?  
Angels who walk the silent ages thro',  
Waiting the while time indolently lingers  
Patient forever 'mid high heaven's blue;

Waiting till evening star shall not be needed  
Ere they release the beacon held so long;  
Till moon and stars shall shine—by men unheeded,  
Men drunk with fighting, deaf with battle song?



Or, is the evening star a jewel shining  
Far on the altar stairs that lead to God,  
Gem that was found with never toil or mining,  
By seraph hosts with holy sandals shod?

Who knoweth? None—Shine on, O star, and  
guide us,  
As ever when the world turns to her rest;  
Upward we lift our eyes whate'er betide us,  
Hungry for thee that shineth in the west.

O, work of God, if gem or angel fire,  
Shine on us alway from the twilight sky,  
Until at last of life and strife we tire,  
Then beam thou over where we sleeping lie.



## SONG OF NIGHT

Hast e'er seen the night descending  
On the mountain tops afar,  
Twilight into blackness blending,  
Broken by a flashing star;  
While the crescent slips away,  
Showing where the foolish day,  
Trembling, fled from Night advancing,  
Down behind the mountains dancing,  
Where the dead days are?

Hast thou seen Night's jewels shining  
On her shield of purple-blue?  
Gold and silver is the lining,  
With vermillion streaks shot through  
For the Spirits of the North  
Painted it and hung it forth  
Ere time had a fair beginning,  
Or the wheel of Fate 'gan spinning  
What it spins for me and you.

Hast beheld her girdle gleaming  
As above thou turn'st thine eyes,  
With its million star points beaming,  
Flung across the silent skies—  
Woven long, ah, long ago,  
Ere the ice had birth—or snow,



Held in place by God's own finger,  
Where it seems to droop and linger  
O'er the heavens dropp'd bow-wise?

Watching through the midnight hours,  
Hast thou seen Night's planets pale,  
As starlike arbutus flowers  
Languish in the wooded vale,  
Till the Morning Star awakes,  
Songs of Dawn the silence breaks,  
And the peaceful, sapphire mountains  
Loose the tongues of all their fountains,  
Thrust their misty veils away  
To greet the new-born Day?



## GOD'S ROSE GARDEN

When day declineth, in the misty West  
Shineth a rosy light above the hills,  
Faintly, increasing; till behold ! at length  
It's glory all the purple valley fills;  
'Tis but the pale, reflected light on high  
Of God's Rose Garden far beyond the sky.

Of God's Rose Garden where exultingly  
The Spirit-children 'mid His roses play,  
Singing their songs in lisping accents sweet  
Throughout Eternity's mysterious day:  
Each child borne far beyond frail human love  
Plays in the Garden of the Lord above.



## NIGHT

Night and a pale moon sailing  
    Behind the poplar trees;  
Long silver moonbeams trailing  
    Across the lonely leas;  
Night, with a thousand blossoms  
    Asleep beneath the moon,  
Where zephyrs dropp'd from heaven  
    Their lullabies soft croon.

## LOVE

Breath of a flower—Heaven-born,  
Light of the rosy Eden morn;  
Song that a Seraph sang when Earth  
Fresh from the hand of God had birth.



## THE MOON-QUEEN

Hast seen the misty Moon-Queen sailing  
In crescent barge when sunset's paling  
    With poppies on her brow,  
And pale moon-flowers languid lying,  
Mix'd with vale-lilies sweetly dying,  
    Wound round the barge's prow?

Her hair the starlight interlaces,  
And 'mid the azure, starry spaces  
    She reigneth all supreme,  
Her diadem's live jewels glimmer,  
And o'er her shoulders cast their shimmer,  
    And throb and glow and gleam.

Deep, deep her eyes, as midnight dreaming,  
Anon with meteor glances gleaming,  
    And from the Moon-Queen's lips  
A song of love and mystery,  
Unknown to human history,  
    In undulations slips;  
With fairy melody empearled,  
Down to the dreaming world.



## NOX

Across the hills a dusky army moves,  
The troops of night;

Their shadow plumes are fluttered by the breeze;  
They silent stir beneath the forest trees.]

With footsteps light.

And as they come slow marching thro' the vales,  
The blackness creeps

Athwart the Earth. Then with her flags unfurled  
Night keepeth watch over the weary world,  
And mankind sleeps.



## TO AN ORIOLE

Trustingly thou buildest on a limb  
Heavy with white blossoms honey-tipped;  
Where, when Nature sang her matin hymn,  
Eager bees the dewy nectar sipped;  
Where all day emblazoned butterflies  
Spread their wings 'gainst Spring's translucent  
skies.

Ne'er a thought of care o'ershadowing thee,  
Thou thy nest dost deftly fasten where  
It shall quiver whene'er sways the tree,  
Tremble with each shifting breath of air;  
Like a thing affrighted greatly quake  
When at night the thunderous storm-clouds  
break.

Yet thou buildest, all day heeding naught  
Save the whiteness of the locust bloom,  
Save the hangings of strange weavings wrought,  
Decorating thy suspended room;  
Working confidently all the while  
In the sunshine seeing God's own smile.



## FLOWERS

In the forest, 'mid deserted marshes,  
Oft we discover flow'rets frail and fair,  
Rooted in slime and ooze they lift pure faces  
Breathing a benediction on the air. . . .

So in the city, 'mid vile slums and squalor,  
Find we a child with smiling, angel face  
Living with crime, yet in its innocence  
Hallowing e'en the darkest, foulest place.



## THE LILY OF HEART'S DESIRE

Far in the garden of Hesperides  
A lily lifts its crimson cup in air,  
And reigns the royal queen of all the blooms  
That wave their opalescent petals there.

A flower with the very hue of blood,  
Flame-streaked—seeming moulded from fierce  
fire,  
Drenched by a flood of tears—sad passion's tears,  
'Tis called the Lily of the Heart's Desire.

Men see it in their dreams and vainly strive  
To clasp the bloom, but fingers ne'er shall hold  
That magic lily with its burning rim  
And throbbing stamens dusted o'er with gold.

For who may find the garden? What swift barque  
Shall cleave the virgin tide of unknown seas—  
And in the flush of dawn sight suddenly  
The mystic island of Hesperides?

Where palms stand blue against a cloudless sky;  
Where singing sirens strike the silvern lyre,  
Where drunken with its own exquisiteness  
Glows the rich Lily of the Heart's Desire.



## MIGNONETTE

I sing of Mignonette—  
And straight before mine eyes  
I see once more the garden old,  
Its winding paths, its wayward hedge of box,  
Its beds of mignonette and marigold.

I sing of Mignonette—  
Once more I do behold  
The quiet parlor dark and still,  
The air full-weighted with fresh mignonette  
And Phoebe dreaming on the window-sill.

I sing of Mignonette—  
I hear again the sound  
Of wedding bells upon a day  
In early Spring when music filled the air,  
When all the country—all the world—was gay.

I sing of Mignonette—  
And catch the murmured tone  
Of rain-drops falling soft like tears  
Shed for the memory of withered hopes,  
Of joys that vanished with forgotten years.

I sing of Mignonette—  
Upon a lowly mound  
Where moaning winds float slowly by;  
I sing of Mignonette—yet now my song  
Hath sore become one sad and broken sigh.



## SONG OF JUNE

I know a meadow where the wild lark sings,  
Where daisies nod and beckon all the day,  
Where butterflies spread wide their irised wings,  
And dancing o'er the blossoms seem to say:

Live as we do  
The summer through,  
Banishing care and sadness,  
For the World's atune  
To the song of June,  
And mad for very gladness !



## AUGUST

Queenly August silver-shod,  
Asters wild and goldenrod  
    In her hand,  
Sweeps from o'er the dreaming hills  
Past the silver, singing rills  
    Through the land.

Breathing perfume everywhere,  
Incense-like upon the air,  
    Doth she come  
Where the Summer's tardy rose  
In neglected garden grows:  
    Where bees hum.

Where a crescent, ghostly pale,  
Shines when darkness holds the vale,  
    Where nights long  
Mocking birds entrancingly  
Fill the spot with melody  
    Of their song.



## AN AUTUMN DAY

Red flame the maples by the water edge,  
Dyeing the ripples of the sluggish stream,  
And goldenrod with largess fills the land,  
Which smiles all day as in a happy dream.

The purple mountains kiss white clouds that leap  
Along their bastions lifted calmly high;  
And over all the mid-day moon is hung  
A severed pearl, amid a milky sky.



## ECHO

Why dwellest thou in the purple hills  
Alone, Echo?  
For where the sun scarce penetrates  
Thou'rt wont to go,  
In still, deserted caverns where the gloom  
Gives thee scant room—  
Why dwell'st alone, Echo?

I love the purple hills, the caves,  
The deep-grove aisles,  
There grow Narcissus blossoms in  
The dark defiles;  
There may I dream till stars grow old above  
Of my lost love—  
So dwell I ever lone.



## WHITE HYACINTH

Caressed by wandering winds,  
Sun-kissed, dew-drenched,  
This blossom springeth from the vernal sod:  
All fragrant in its spotless chastity;  
A thought of God.



## WILD SWANS

I saw them rise, six swans as white as pearls,  
From where the cypress trees stand grimly dark,  
Where moss hangs heavy o'er a magic pool  
Unruffled by the wary hunter's barque,  
Where pure pond lilies, with great hearts of gold,  
Their shining petals silently unfold.

Six swans, whose pinions caught the amber glow  
Of sunlight sifting through dense forest trees,  
Six swans whose plumes were softly ruffled by  
A wayward, undulating river breeze,  
That sprang, like Venus, in a sweet unrest  
From foam that curl'd upon a wavelet's crest.

For what far port the snowy birds were bound  
Is yet unknown, and mounting in the blue  
They circled ever higher, till at last,  
'Mid rolling clouds they disappeared from view,  
Mayhap to join the swans that fly, they say,  
Forever onward through the Milky Way.

For once six hunters, in a bygone day,  
In this same magic cypress pool were drowned,  
And ghostly swans their spirits bore away  
To where all worthy ones are golden-crowned,  
Beyond those skies where great Orion stands  
With starry weapons in his shining hands.



## AT SEA

Sunset of gold and rose  
Fading to dun,  
Wind from the shore that blows  
After the sun.

Songs from the sailor lad,  
Laughter; a call—  
Minors that echo sad,  
Darkness o'er all.



## FRAGMENT

Water and shore of silver  
Sunset and crescent's bow,  
Stars shining in God's heaven  
Upon the rosy glow:  
Love in the world and laughter,  
Tears in the world and gall—  
And—thro' enduring ages  
God's mercy over all!

LO. OF C.

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